



*A Service of Worship for
Transfiguration Sunday
27 February 2022*

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

Mary Oliver

Preparing for worship with silence

Gathering in peace

Peace be with you!
And also with you!

Ringling in the hour

Silence is kept

Prelude

J.S. Bach
(1685-1750)

“Fugue in C Major” (“The Fanfare Fugue”)

Call to Worship

*+Opening Hymn #421

Wareham

“The Church of Christ in Every Age”

+Opening Sentences

**We imagine a realm where rich lie down with poor;
healthy with ill; Christian, Jew, and Muslim together.
The wicked and the virtuous share a meal,
the complacent and the suffering hold hands,
and a little child is leading them.
We hunger for this realm where love rules,
where both the forgiving and the forgiven are blessed,
where nothing separates us,
where heaven and earth are one.**

Scripture Lesson

Luke 6:27-38

These are our sacred stories.

Thanks be to God.

Time for Children

+Response:

Lasst uns erfreuen

**In every land begin the song,
To every land the strains belong:
Alleluia! Alleluia!
In cheerful sound all voices raise
And fill the world with joyful praise.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Call to Confession

Silent Confession

Unison Confession

**Spirit of life, come to us to break down barriers;
to widen horizons;
to make us less judgmental.**

**Help us to see the larger picture and the kinder conclusion;
to love and let live;
to embrace and forgive;
to sustain and care.**

**Help us to reach out to our better selves,
that we may love more and hate less,
care more and reject less,
that bound together by understanding
we may sustain each other through trial and tribulation,
through joy and happiness,
through sickness and health.**

**Help us, O God, to be joined in a common purpose of hope and fulfillment.
Renew and revive us.
We seek a common, holy ground for one and all.
Amen.**

Words of Assurance

Music

Maurice Duruflé
(1902-1986)

*“Ubi Caritas”
Where charity and love are, God is there.
Christ's love has gathered us into one.
Let us rejoice and be pleased in Christ.
Let us fear, and let us love the living God.
And may we love each other with a sincere heart.*

Silent Reflection

Proclamation

“God of Freedom, God of Justice”

**God of freedom, God of justice,
You whose love is strong as death,
You who saw the dark of prison,
You who knew the price of faith—
Touch our world of sad oppression
With Your Spirit's healing breath.**

**Rid the earth of torture's terror,
You whose hands were nailed to wood;
Hear the cries of pain and protest,
You who shed the tears and blood—
Move in us the pow'r of pity
Restless for the common good.**

**Make in us a captive conscience
Quick to hear, to act, to plead;
Make us truly sisters, brothers
Of whatever race or creed—
Teach us to be fully human,
Open to each other's need.**

Prayer

Invitations

Offering

Offertory

J.S. Bach
(1685-1750)

“Sinfonia” from Cantata No. 156

+Prayer of Dedication

**Lead me from death to life,
from falsehood to truth.
Lead me from despair to hope,
from fear to trust.
Lead me from hate to love,
from war to peace.
Let peace fill our hearts,
our world, our universe.**

*Doxology

Old Hundredth

*Praise God the Source of life and birth.
Praise God the Word, who came to earth.
Praise God the Spirit, holy flame,
All glory, honor to God's name! Amen.*

+Affirmation of Faith

**We, unaccustomed to courage
exiles from delight
live coiled in shells of loneliness
until love leaves its high holy temple
and comes into our sight
to liberate us into life.**

**Love arrives
and in its train come ecstasies
old memories of pleasure
ancient histories of pain.
Yet if we are bold,
love strikes away the chains of fear
from our souls.**

**We are weaned from our timidity
In the flush of love's light
we dare be brave
And suddenly we see
that love costs all we are
and will ever be.
Yet it is only love
which sets us free.**

+Closing Hymn #405

“What Does the Lord Require”

Sharpthorne

Benediction

Postlude

“Fanfare”

Kenneth Leighton
(1929-1988)

Worship Notes

The worship leader is **Tim Wegner**.

The Call to Worship is by Mzwakhe Mbuli, reprinted in *Life Prayers from Around the World*, edited by Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon.

The Opening Sentences are adapted from *The Well is Deep: Prayers to Draw Up Living Water* by Virginia Rickeman.

The Unison Confession is a prayer of Rhys Williams.

The text of “God of Freedom, God of Justice” is by Shirley Erena Murray (1980).

The Pastoral Prayer is given by Deacon **Annie Christensen**.

The Prayer of Dedication is from Project Plowshares, as reprinted in *Singing the Living Tradition, the hymnal of the Unitarian Universalist Association*.

The Affirmation of Faith is by Maya Angelou.

Education 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Adult Education

Practicing Solidarity: How White Christians Can Work for Racial Justice

Dr. Rachel C. Schneider is a scholar of religion, race, and culture and a social justice advocate based in Houston, Texas. Rachel currently is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Rice University's Religion and Public Life Program (RPLP). She also serves as a Co-Managing Director for projectCURATE—a Houston-based non-profit social justice and civic engagement organization that works with faith communities to advance racial equity and racial justice.

Rachel is currently working on a book project *Christianity, Whiteness, and the Quest for a New South Africa* that examines how progressive white Christians living in South Africa engage with past and present racial injustice. She has also published numerous articles that examine religion and inequality in the United States.

- Lisa Spiro

Children & Youth Sunday School

We will have two options for Sunday School: virtual from 10-10:30, and in-person in the Huff Fellowship Hall from 10:30-11 (masks required). This way, everyone can take part in the fun.

- Trena Jamison

Zoom links and materials are available on the Online Gatherings page on our website:

<https://www.covenantheouston.org/covenant-gatherings.html>

Announcements

Ash Wednesday is coming up on March 2, and Covenant will be offering an Ash Wednesday service of worship with imposition of ashes. The service will be in the Covenant sanctuary at 7:30 p.m. We will still wear masks, and if you do not feel comfortable coming forward to receive ashes on your forehead, you are welcome to remain in your seat.

- Worship Committee

Calendar

Sun, Feb 27	9:00 am	Adult Education, Zoom Meeting
	10:00 am	Children & Youth Sunday School, Zoom
	10:30 am	Children & Youth Sunday School, Covenant
	11:00 am	Worship in-person, Covenant
	11:00 am	Worship live-stream
Tue. Mar 1	1:00 pm	Lunchtime Lectionary Lab, Zoom Meeting
Wed. Mar 2	7:30 pm	Ash Wednesday Service in-person, Covenant
	7:30 pm	Ash Wednesday Service live-stream
Thur. Mar 3	10:00 am	Community Group, Zoom Meeting
Thur. Mar 3	7:15 pm	Covenant Singers Rehearsal, Covenant
Fri. Mar 4	1:00 pm	Book Club, Zoom Meeting

Helpful Information

Visitor Cards: If you're a visitor with us, please submit a [Visitors Card](#).

Celebrations and Concerns: If you would like to share a celebration or concern with the Covenant community, please submit a [Celebrations and Concerns Form](#).

Membership: If you are interested in learning more about Covenant, we encourage you to talk with one of the ministers or the worship leader. Email Office@covenanthouston.org.

Newsletter: To subscribe to the newsletter, send a request to office@covenanthouston.org.

Office Hours: The church office is currently not open, but we are responding to emails and phone calls.

*Covenant Church affirms the sanctity, dignity, and equality
of human beings and the value of all life in the universe.*

*We welcome persons of all racial and ethnic heritages, all sexual orientations,
all gender identities, and all faith perspectives to our Christian community.*

*We stand for each individual's right to worship God and to respond
to God's call to ministry in her or his own understanding
of God's all-encompassing love.*

*We value a holistic approach to faith and seek to worship in ways that are
intellectually credible, emotionally stimulating, spiritually engaging
and contemporarily relevant.*

We value music and art and ritual to express what we cannot ever fully say.

*We value participation so that we might hear many approaches
to our shared faith.*

Covenant Church, an ecumenical, liberal, Baptist congregation

Members of Covenant, Ministers

Fran Avera, Minister of Music, Emerita

Monique Cruz, Office and Financial Administrator

Trena' Jamison, Director of Children and Youth

David Lee, Director of Music

Laura Mayo, Senior Minister

Christopher Teel, Organist

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Pursuant to Section 30.07, Penal Code (trespass by license holder with an openly carried handgun), a person licensed under Subchapter H, Chapter 411, Government Code (handgun licensing law), may not enter this property with a handgun that is carried openly.